

BLACK OAK MINE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



P.O. Box 4510
Georgetown, CA 95634

Phone: (530) 333-8300
Fax: (530) 333-8303
E-Mail: ryohe@bomusd.org

Interim Superintendent

Roger Yohe

Director of Ed. Services

Tammy Gabel

Board of Trustees

Darcy Knight

Michele Kringel

Rodger Musso

Richard Palmiere

Charlie Rose

To: The Federal Communications Commission
From: Black Oak Mine Unified School District
Re: CC Docket No.02-06
Date: September 5, 2008

The Black Oak Mine Unified School District gives its strong support to the proposed addition of "telephone broadcast messaging" to the list of services eligible for support under the schools and libraries ("E-rate") program.

It is well recognized that improving communications between and among educators, students, and parents can play a vital role in improving educational performance in elementary and secondary schools. Telephone broadcast messaging offers significant advantages and benefits over the less efficient means which schools traditionally used to reach out to students and parents, such as hand-delivered written notices and phone tree messages.

For example, telephone broadcast messaging is typically used as a means of contacting parents regarding absent or truant students, thereby facilitating increased classroom attendance. We also use the telephone broadcast messaging to notify and inform parents of testing schedules, parent/teacher conferences, special school events and to otherwise increase participation by parents in their children's education.

A further and significant benefit of telephone broadcast messaging is that it can provide an important emergency response resource in the event of weather-related events, health or other civil emergencies, or other incidents that require schools to lock down or transfer students to safe locations. We have used this emergency functions in the past year to evacuate one of elementary/middle schools due to a nearby forest fire spreading rapidly in the school's direction and the need to close several schools early in the day due to a water/sewage problem that occurred.

In enacting the E-rate program in 1996, Congress recognized that many schools and libraries have limited resources that constrain their access to emerging technologies that can enhance and support their educational mission. Telephone broadcast messaging, which allows schools to more efficiently and effectively communicate with students and parents, is a prime example of such an emerging technology and should be included within the E-rate program's list of eligible services.

Sincerely,

Debbi Herr
Director of Coordinated School Health and Safety
Black Oak Mine Unified School District
dherr@bomusd.org

Cc: Roger Yohe, Interim Superintendent
Tammy Gabel, Director, Educational Services

Sherre Garcia, Superintendent Secretary